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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: JAPAN, CLIMATE, MIDEAST, GERMANY

- [¶1.](#) Lead Stories Summary
- [¶2.](#) (Japan) Outcome of Parliamentary Elections
- [¶3.](#) (UN) Climate Conference
- [¶4.](#) (Mideast) Peace Process
- [¶5.](#) (Germany) Outcome of State Parliament Elections

[¶1.](#) Lead Stories Summary

There is only one item that dominates all the print media: the outcome of the state parliament elections in Thuringia, Saxony, and the Saarland. Editorials also focused on the outcome of the state parliament elections and on the results of the parliamentary elections in Japan. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau also centered on the elections in Thuringia, the Saarland, and Saxony.

[¶2.](#) (Japan) Outcome of Parliamentary Elections

According to an editorial in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, "it is likely that changes will happen in Japan's foreign policy. Even though the DJP has a majority in the Lower House, Hatoyama plans to form a coalition government. One of the possible partners is the Social Democratic Party which is very traditional. It rejects sending Japanese soldiers abroad. The DJP, in turn, is much more pragmatic, but differences of opinion will not prevent the formation of a new coalition government. But they could deteriorate relations with the United States and other allies, to the detriment of Japan and its allies. But this is something no one wants in Japan right now. The people just hope that the situation will improve. Disappointments are likely but it cannot be expected that the longing for a return of the LDP will erupt."

Under the headline: "Revenge of the Japanese Voter," Sueddeutsche Zeitung argued: "Former Prime Minister Taro Aso is probably the last face of the LDF before it will enter the history books. In the past eleven months, he hardly had a chance to turn around the wheel. On the other hand, the party with Aso at the helm showed its true face: it was arrogant, self righteous, snotty and demonstrated a deeply-rooted disrespect for the ordinary people. Aso's derogatory remarks over pensioners, women, minorities and low-incomers alone would be a justification for the voters' slap in the party's face."

Financial Times Deutschland headlined: "Democratic Revolution" and

editorialized: "Only before was the allegation correct that a party was on the road to collapse as in Japan. That is why it is all the more important that the voters in Japan have now voted for a historic change. The opposition Democratic Party has now ended this de facto one-party rule. This revolution offers Japan a chance in several respects. DJP front runner Yukio Hatoyama has a good initial position to become a strong prime minister. The change of power also offers the Japanese economy a great chance. With its sharp collapse in the global economic crisis, it has become clear how dangerous Japan's dependency on exports has become. But in contrast to politicians in Germany, Hatoyama has learned his lesson from the crisis. He is determined to reprocess the country's business model and to correct Japan's dependency on exports."

Tagesspiegel wondered: "Will Yukio Hatoyama bring about change which he promised? No, certainly not. The Japanese only know two states: radical total reforms in all spheres of life or a tough sticking to traditions. Currently, the latter dominates in the country. An aging and discouraged society prefers to return to the glittering 1980s, when Japanese companies were about to buy the United States. But despite his nice phrases of change and new paths, the Japanese did not elect him to depart for a new future. They still want to seal off their country against immigration, do not want to improve relations with their neighbors, and do not want to offer their armed forces for international missions. They also do not dare reduce the state's record indebtedness. Instead, Hatoyama is promising the impossible: a higher minimum wage, higher children allowances, free autobahns, and reduced pensioner contributions to the healthcare system. In the long run, he will ruin the state's budget with such a policy. Hatoyama knows this, and he is risking the disappointment of his voters; but first of all he wants to be elected."

Frankfurter Rundschau had this to say: "The new government will now face the same problems as former Premier Koizumi. It is inexperienced with respect to governing, let alone regarding implementing reforms. And the old boys' network within the LDP is still active. Even though it no longer has the say in the Diet, the power center still lies within the LDP. But, nevertheless, Hatoyama still has one great advantage over Koizumi: a true democratic mandate. Time will tell what the value of this mandate in Japan will be."

13. (UN) Climate Conference

Die Welt carried a lengthy editorial on the attempts to reach a post-Kyoto agreement, wondering whether "the climate protection goals have failed already before the Copenhagen summit?" The commentary notes: "The Danish government cancelled 20,000 room reservations for the climate summit in Copenhagen.... If you needed any more evidence that the preparations are stuck in a crisis, this is it.... There will be no agreement that comes anywhere close to the high expectations concerning the reduction of carbon dioxide, which had been built up since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shocked the world in 2007.... The emerging countries will not make obligations on reducing carbon dioxide. Given that they will soon be the greatest emitters, the burden to which Europe will commit its shaken industries and consumers will be insignificant. Neither does America go down the same path; the new unpromising climate protection law has not been enforced yet. In addition, Russia, Canada and Australia are skeptical about drastic reduction goals, and the disagreements within Europe are becoming increasingly clear. Eastern Europe is increasingly skeptical, warning against the loss of jobs. It is an illusion that the summit will agree on payments worth hundreds of billions, which emerging countries could get from industrialized countries to encourage their green policies. Even when the economic crisis is over, the high deficits will remain."

14. (Mideast) Peace Process

Die Welt (8/29) commented: "Even if all Israeli settlements in the West Bank were gone tomorrow, there would be no peace in the in the Mideast. Netanyahu has rightly pointed this out to his interlocutors in London and Berlin. The topic of the settlements is not the only obstacle on the path to peace. The Israeli government is therefore annoyed, arguing... that only if the Palestinians recognize Israel as the Jewish state, would there be a chance for peace."

15. (Germany) Outcome of State Parliament Elections

Sueddeutsche Zeitung judged: "This dress rehearsal was not rapturous but a nice success for the SPD, which primarily consists of the sharp decline of the CDU's support in the Saarland and in Thuringia.

But the SPD is beginning to sing drinking songs when the members only got mineral water. A success will thus turn into a great victory and a downward trend, which has just come to an end, will turn into a turnabout for the SPD. We do not grudge the SPD this. The party will now have to show whether it is able to take advantage of this favorable moment and take advantage of it in coalition talks, i.e. that the party does not forfeit its fortune in such a miserable way as it did in Hesse."

In the view of Financial Times Deutschland, "this triple election does not change the situation before the Bundestag election because the SPD, despite the heavy CDU losses, cannot claim that the situation has changed in its favor. In Saxony, it achieved a similarly miserable result as in 2004. In Thuringia, it clearly trails behind the Left Party and it would be absurd if it demanded the portfolio of minister president. It is true that a coalition with the Left Party and the Greens under the leadership of the SPD could happen, but in view of the fact that the SPD rules out such a coalition at the federal level, it cannot deviate from the party line. The only insight is that, instead of a coalition between the FDP and the CDU at the federal level, there can be a continuation of the grand coalition. But this was already known before."

Regional daily Nordsee-Zeitung of Oldenburg judged: "Chancellor Merkel is in a dilemma. If she now begins to attack the FDP and unmasks the liberals, the CDU/CSU would gain votes but, in the end, she would not get enough votes for a coalition between the CDU and the FDP. At the same time, the CDU seems to be unable to attract votes from the SPD, for its values can be described as only the dregs. If Merkel is not blinded by personal opinion ratings, she should also see at the horizon something that frightens many, but has become more likely since yesterday: a smaller grand coalition, second attempt."

Münchener Abendzeitung argued: "This [result] will have consequences: The coming Bundestag elections will enter the history books as an election that will not be decided in the center. It will be decided in the political struggle between two camps: the right-wing camp made up of the CDU and the FDP and the left-wing camp made up of the SPD, the Left Party, and the Greens. Parts of the CSU have already realized this, but the Chancellor is turning a blind eye to this. And what about the SPD? It would prefer to win the Bundestag election without showing a clear position. It is unable to score points even if it has a clear position. Its hopes rest - and this is a bitter fact for the SPD members - on Left Party Chairman Oskar Lafontaine."

Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung noted: "Many people are now wondering what use will the Chancellor's great popular support be if it does not find its expression in corresponding votes for her party? Merkel will certainly also be asked whether her election campaign style, which consists primarily of not making this look like an election campaign, is really the best approach. Some in the CDU/CSU are already calling for attacks on the SPD, the Left Party, and the Greens, and think that this is the ideal strategy for the coming four weeks before the Bundestag elections. The more thoughtful members recommend leaving the debate over the Left Party to SPD frontrunner Steinmeier. It is true that Steinmeier and SPD chairman Müntefering must still explain why their supporters in the Länder are delighted that they have the chance to decide on future coalitions on their own, while such coalitions [with the Left Party] are out of the question on the federal level."